Solo Leveling

Art · DUBU(REDICE STUDIO)
Original Novel · Chugong
Story · h-goon

85

JUST AS ESIL HAD WARNED ME, THE DIFFICULTY LEVEL GREW EXPONENTIALLY HIGHER STARTING WITH THE 90TH FLOOR.

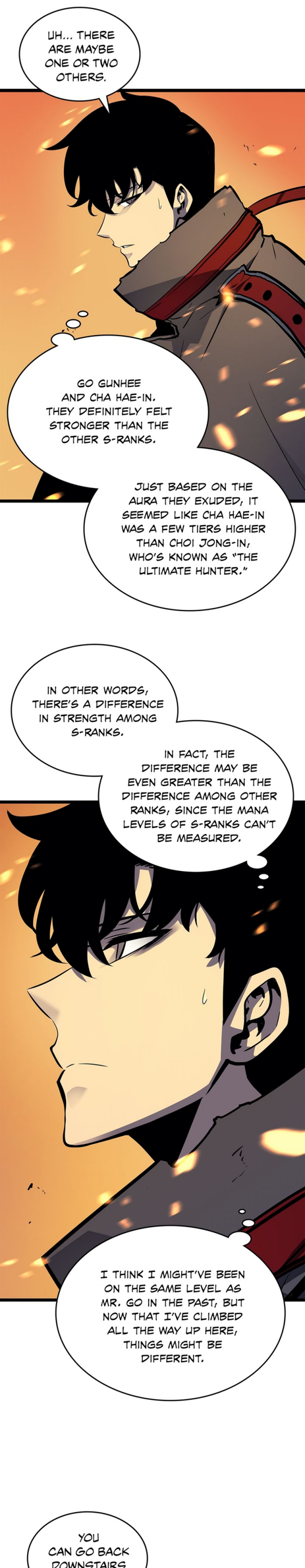
THERE WERE MANY MORE MONSTERS GUARDING THE CASTLE, AND ALL RANKED HIGHER THAN THE DEMONS I HAD BATTLED ON THE LOWER FLOORS.

EVEN THOUGH I INCREASED MY INTELLIGENCE STAT, THE BATTLES HAVE TAKEN A HUGE TOLL ON MY MANA...
...BECAUSE MY SHADOW SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN REPEATEDLY DESTROYED AND

REGENERATED.

97TH FLOOR

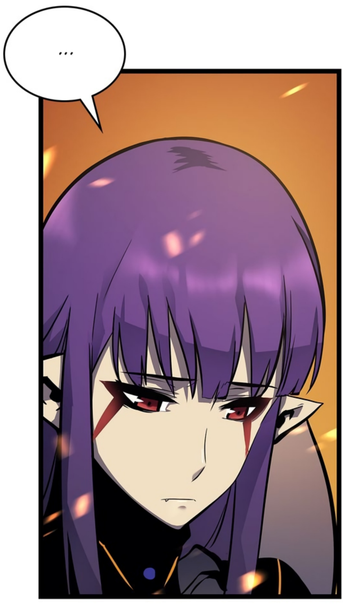
HE DEFEATED THE RICADO CLAN, WHICH IS THE FIFTH MOST POWERFUL CLAN, AND WENT ON TO DEFEAT THE FOURTH MOST POWERFUL CLAN, PEITOS, AS WELL...


UH... THERE ARE MAYBE ONE OR TWO OTHERS.
GO GUNHEE AND CHA HAE-IN. THEY DEFINITELY FELT STRONGER THAN THE OTHER S-RANKS.
JUST BASED ON THE AURA THEY EXUDED, IT SEEMED LIKE CHA HAE-IN WAS A FEW TIERS HIGHER THAN CHOI JONG-IN, WHO'S KNOWN AS "THE ULTIMATE HUNTER."
IN OTHER WORDS, THERE'S A DIFFERENCE IN STRENGTH AMONG S-RANKS.
IN FACT, THE DIFFERENCE MAY BE EVEN GREATER THAN THE DIFFERENCE AMONG OTHER RANKS, SINCE THE MANA LEVELS OF S-RANKS CAN'T BE MEASURED.
I THINK I MIGHT'VE BEEN ON THE SAME LEVEL AS MR. GO IN THE PAST, BUT NOW THAT I'VE CLIMBED ALL THE WAY UP HERE, THINGS MIGHT BE DIFFERENT.
YOU CAN GO BACK DOWNSTAIRS

NOW.
FROM HERE ON OUT, I'LL FIGURE OUT THE WAY MYSELF.

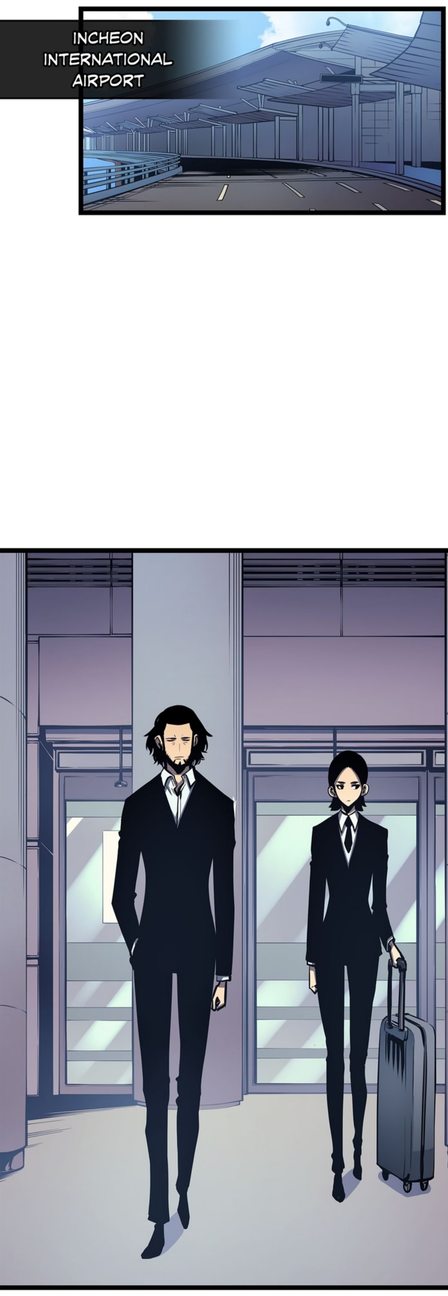
WHAT?
A, AM I...
...NOT USEFUL TO YOU ANYMORE?

SHE'S A FUNNY ONE, ALL RIGHT.
YOU'VE DONE A GOOD JOB. THANKS FOR ALL YOUR HELP.


...

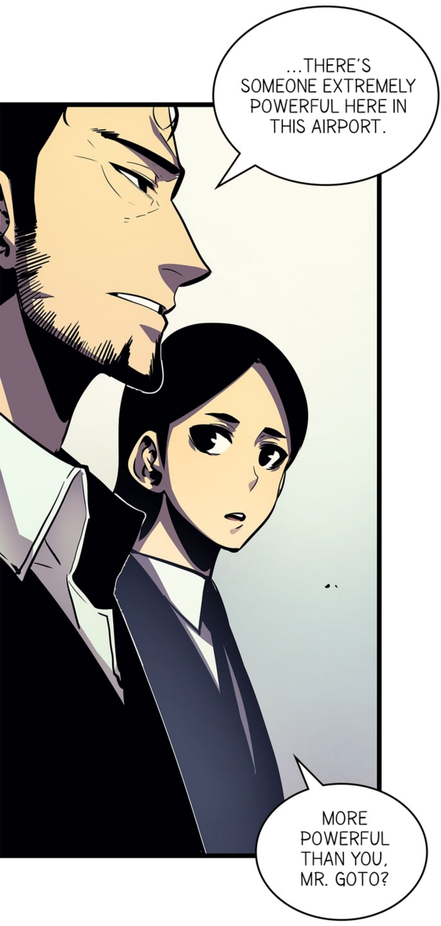
NO, I'M GOING WITH YOU.
I WANT TO SEE...
...WHAT YOU CAN ACHIEVE.

[YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE 98TH FLOOR.]


INCHEON
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT

WHAT'S WITH ALL THE COMMOTION?*
S-RANK HUNTER
GOTO RYUJI

*The speakers are talking in Japanese.

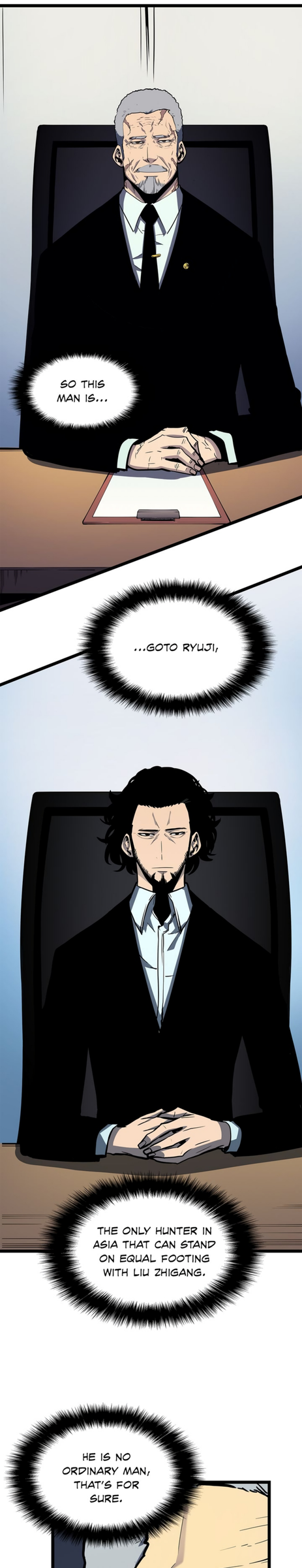

...THERE'S SOMEONE EXTREMELY POWERFUL HERE IN THIS AIRPORT.
MORE POWERFUL THAN YOU, MR. GOTO?

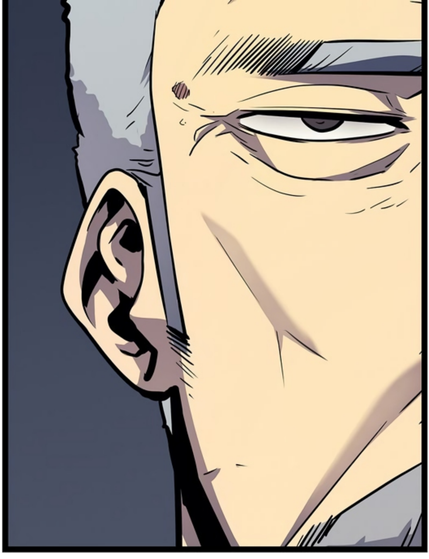
MAYBE I WAS WRONG... WHY WOULD SOMEONE LIKE THAT BE HERE?
MY APOLOGIES. IT TOOK ME SOME TIME TO GET THROUGH THE CROWD.

IT'S ALL RIGHT. IS THERE SOMETHING GOING ON AT THE AIRPORT TODAY?

OH, A HUNTER FROM THE UNITED STATES IS VISITING SOUTH KOREA.
HE'S HERE ON PERSONAL BUSINESS, THOUGH, SO THERE'S NO NEED TO BE CONCERNED.

AN AMERICAN HUNTER...?
I WONDER IF HE HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE RECENT EVENTS.
THIS WAY, PLEASE.

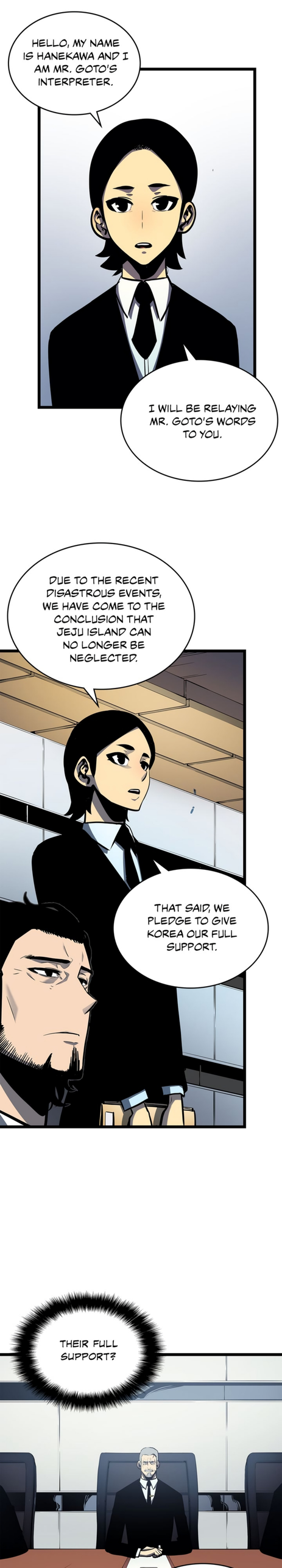

SO THIS MAN IS...
...GOTO RYUJI,
THE ONLY HUNTER IN ASIA THAT CAN STAND ON EQUAL FOOTING WITH LIU ZHIGANG.
HE IS NO ORDINARY MAN, THAT'S FOR SURE.



THERE ARE CURRENTLY 21 S-RANK HUNTERS IN JAPAN, AND 11 OF THEM ARE MEMBERS OF THE SAME GUILD AS GOTO RYUJI, THE BLADE GUILD.

UNLIKE SOUTH KOREA, WHERE THERE ARE FIVE MAJOR GUILDS COMPETING AGAINST EACH OTHER, A SINGLE GUILD HOLDS ALL THE POWER IN JAPAN.

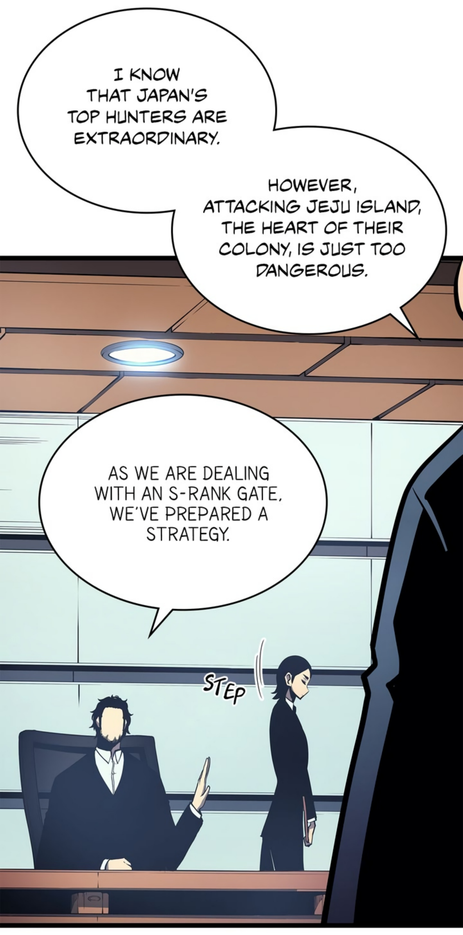
EVERYONE KNOWS THAT GOTO RYUJI'S GUILD IS THE SECOND LARGEST IN ASIA. THE LARGEST IS A CHINESE GUILD.


HELLO, MY NAME IS HANEKAWA AND I AM MR. GOTO'S INTERPRETER.
I WILL BE RELAYING MR. GOTO'S WORDS TO YOU.
DUE TO THE RECENT DISASTROUS EVENTS, WE HAVE COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT JEJU ISLAND CAN NO LONGER BE NEGLECTED.
THAT SAID, WE PLEDGE TO GIVE KOREA OUR FULL SUPPORT.
THEIR FULL SUPPORT?

LET ME GET STRAIGHT TO THE POINT. THE REASON I'VE COME HERE IS BECAUSE...

...I WANT TO FORM A UNITED STRIKE SQUAD COMPOSED OF ONLY OUR TOP-RANKING HUNTERS. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS IDEA?

A UNITED STRIKE SQUAD?!
YOU WANT TO CREATE AN ALLIANCE IN ORDER TO ATTACK THE ANTS AT THEIR BASE CAMP?
YES, EXACTLY.

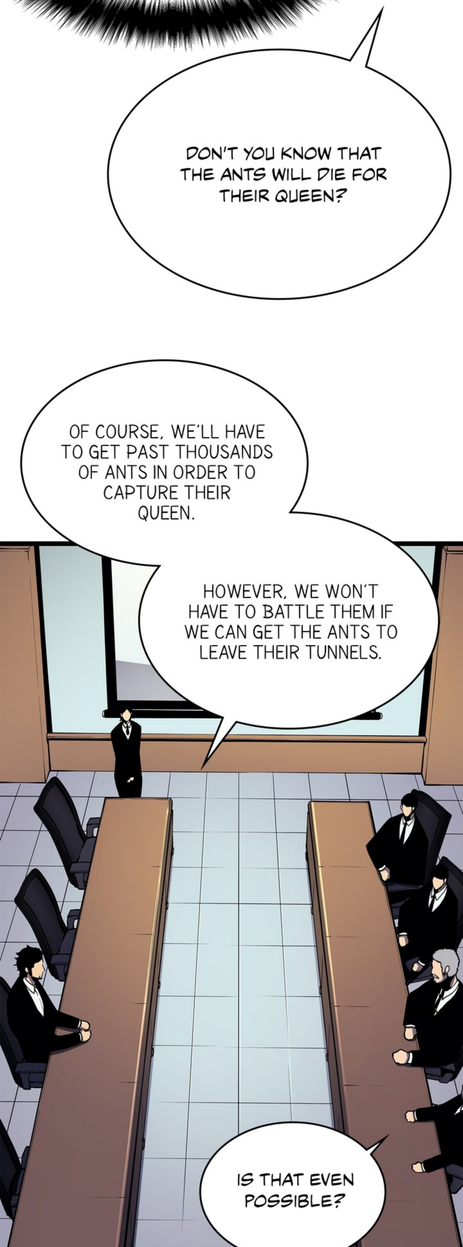

I KNOW THAT JAPAN'S TOP HUNTERS ARE EXTRAORDINARY.
HOWEVER, ATTACKING JEJU ISLAND, THE HEART OF THEIR COLONY, IS JUST TOO DANGEROUS.
AS WE ARE DEALING WITH AN S-RANK GATE, WE'VE PREPARED A STRATEGY.
STEP

THESE ARE THE FILES DOCUMENTING THE DATA WE'VE GATHERED ON THE ANTS.
EVERY SINGLE ANT RIVALS THE STRENGTH OF A HIGH-RANKING HUNTER. HOWEVER, THEY POSSESS A FATAL WEAKNESS.

THE ANTS ARE ONLY CAPABLE OF LIVING FOR ONE YEAR.

THEREFORE, IF WE CAN JUST KILL THEIR QUEEN, ALL OF THE ANTS ON JEJU ISLAND WILL DIE WITHIN A YEAR.

WE JUST HAVE TO ELIMINATE THEIR QUEEN, HUH...?
IT CERTAINLY SOUNDS LIKE A MORE REALISTIC PLAN THAN EXTERMINATING THE ENTIRE COLONY.
BUT IN REALITY, TRYING TO KILL THE QUEEN WILL BE AS HARD AS TRYING TO DEFEAT THOUSANDS OF ANTS.


DON'T YOU KNOW THAT THE ANTS WILL DIE FOR THEIR QUEEN?
OF COURSE, WE'LL HAVE TO GET PAST THOUSANDS OF ANTS IN ORDER TO CAPTURE THEIR QUEEN.
HOWEVER, WE WON'T HAVE TO BATTLE THEM IF WE CAN GET THE ANTS TO LEAVE THEIR TUNNELS.
IS THAT EVEN POSSIBLE?

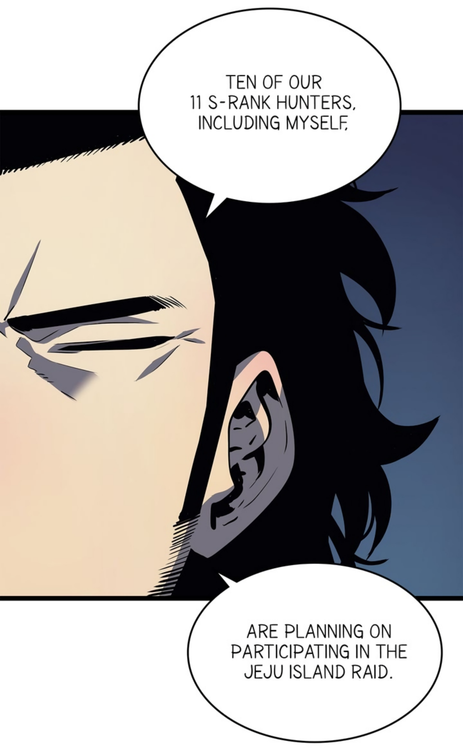
YES, IT HAS HAPPENED BEFORE. THREE TIMES TO BE EXACT.

BACK WHEN SOUTH KOREAN HUNTERS ARRIVED ON THE SHORES OF JEJU TO CARRY OUT A SEARCH-AND-DESTROY MISSION,

THE ANTS LEFT THEIR TUNNELS AND HEADED TOWARD THE BATTLEFIELD.

IMPOSSIBLE!!

THE EVENTS HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED BY OUR MANA RADARS. PLEASE REFER TO THE DOCUMENTS FOR DETAILS.


TEN OF OUR 11 S-RANK HUNTERS, INCLUDING MYSELF,
ARE PLANNING ON PARTICIPATING IN THE JEJU ISLAND RAID.

WE WILL BE IN CHARGE OF DISTRACTING THE ANTS.
PLEASE HAVE SOUTH KOREA'S TOP-RANKING HUNTERS DEFEAT THE QUEEN.
THE REST OF MY FELLOW GUILD MEMBERS WILL ARRIVE SHORTLY.

IF THE 10 S-RANK HUNTERS SUCCESSFULLY CREATE A DIVERSION, ONLY THE QUEEN AND A FEW OF HER GUARDS WILL BE LEFT INSIDE THE TUNNELS.

THIS IS THE PLAN. MY S-RANK HUNTERS WILL FIRST SPLIT UP INTO TEAMS AND ATTACK THE ISLAND FROM ALL DIRECTIONS.

THE ANTS WILL SWARM TOWARD THE SITES OF OUR ATTACKS, WHILE THE QUEEN REMAINS IN THE EMPTY TUNNELS.

THE SOUTH KOREAN S-RANK HUNTERS WILL TAKE A HELICOPTER TO JEJU AND INFILTRATE THE TUNNELS. AFTER DEFEATING THE QUEEN, THEY'LL BOARD THE HELICOPTER AGAIN TO EVACUATE FROM THE ISLAND.

IT CERTAINLY SOUNDS LIKE A PLAUSIBLE PLAN.
BUT WHY IS GOTO RYUJI WILLING TO MOBILIZE 10 OF HIS GUILD'S S-RANKS FOR THIS RAID?!

ALL NATIONAL LEVEL HUNTERS HAVE RAIDED S-RANK GATES BEFORE.
CONSIDERING MY PREVIOUS PERFORMANCE RECORDS, ONCE I FINISH THIS JEJU ISLAND RAID,
I'LL BE HIGH ENOUGH ON THE LADDER TO BE WORTHY OF A NATIONAL LEVEL TITLE.

OBTAINING A NATIONAL LEVEL HUNTER TITLE WILL BE ENOUGH OF A GAIN FOR JAPAN.

THIS IS AN S-RANK GATE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT, SO I'VE CAREFULLY SELECTED 10 S-RANKS TO PARTICIPATE.

I MUST MINIMIZE THE RISK FACTORS.

THE SOUTH KOREANS HAVE NO GOOD REASON TO DECLINE MY OFFER.

THIS ISN'T THE MOST RIGHTEOUS WAY OF DOING THINGS, BUT IN ORDER TO BECOME A NATIONAL LEVEL HUNTER, I HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE.

UNLIKE JAPAN, THERE ARE ONLY EIGHT S-RANK HUNTERS IN KOREA,
AND OUT OF THOSE EIGHT, ONLY SIX ARE REALISTICALLY CAPABLE OF PARTICIPATING IN THE RAID; AS I AM TOO OLD AND MIN BYUNG-GU HAS RETIRED.
FLIP
THIS STRATEGY WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITH JUST THE HUNTERS IN SOUTH KOREA.

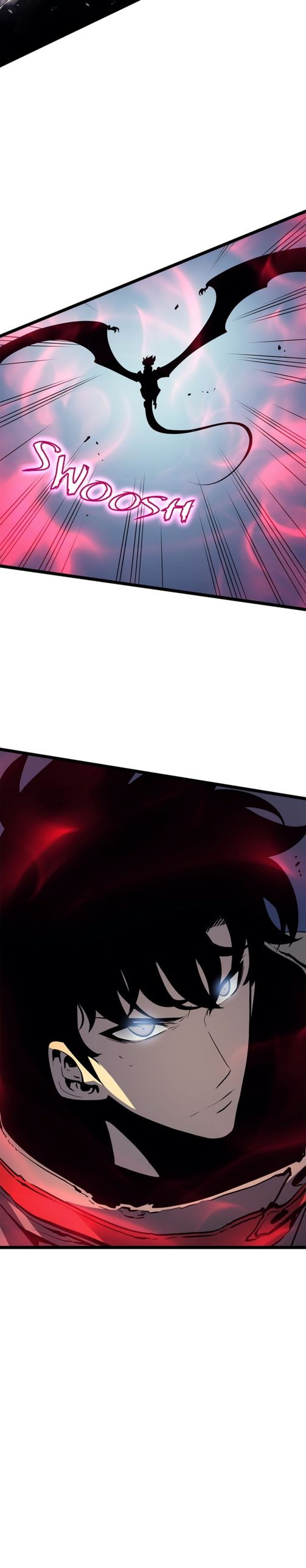
THE REAL QUESTION IS... ARE WE EVEN CAPABLE OF DEFEATING THE BOSS OF AN S-RANK DUNGEON...?
WILL WE BE ABLE TO DEFEAT THE QUEEN?
SUNG JINWOO DEFEATED THE BOSS OF AN A-RANK GATE ALL BY HIMSELF, SO IF HE WERE TO JOIN FORCES WITH THE OTHER S-RANK HUNTERS, WE MIGHT HAVE A CHANCE!

THE ANTS ARE EVOLVING QUICKLY.
THEIR ENTIRE ARMY MAY ACQUIRE THE ABILITY TO TAKE FLIGHT SOON.

WE CAN'T AFFORD TO DELAY ANY LONGER.
I UNDERSTAND.
ONCE THE DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN ASSESSED, WE'LL SEND YOU A DETAILED PLAN.

[LEVEL: 93]

THIS IS THE 100TH FLOOR.


SWOOSH

BOOM
[BARAN, THE DEMON KING]
HE HAS A REMARKABLE FORCE!

BLADE

-ASIA'S SECOND LARGEST GUILD.
-11 GUILD MEMBERS ARE S-RANK HUNTERS.
-BECAUSE THEY ARE A LARGE GUILD, UPON REQUEST, MEMBERS ARE ALSO DISPATCHED OVERSEAS TO CARRY OUT ASSIGNMENTS.

To Be Continued...

D&C WEBTOON

REDICE STUDIO

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